



SIERRA
CLUB
FOUNDED 1892

Connecticut Chapter
645 Farmington Ave.
Hartford, Connecticut 06105
www.connecticut.sierraclub.org

Environment Committee
February 23, 2009
Testimony of Martin Mador
In Favor of

SB 747 An Act Concerning Consistency in Permitting Requirements for Alternative On-site
Sewage Treatment Systems

SB 569 An Act Concerning Enhancements to the Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Act

HB 5820 An Act Conserving Natural Vegetation near Wetlands and Watercourses

HB 5934 An Act Concerning Statutory Training Requirements for
Inland Wetlands Commission Members

HB 5461 An Act Preserving and Protecting Inland Wetlands and Watercourses

HB 5465 An Act Concerning Phosphorus in Detergents

In Opposition to
SB 500 An Act Creating a Rebuttable Presumption for the Approval of Certain Inland Wetlands
Permits

I am Martin Mador, 130 Highland Ave., Hamden, CT 06518. I am the Legislative and Political Chair of the Connecticut Sierra Club, and am here today representing our 10,000 Connecticut members concerned about the health of our environment, our economic well-being, and the quality of life in Connecticut. I possess a Master's of Environmental Management degree from Yale.

SB 5934 is in response to a study released by the CEQ, which shows that commissioner training is correlated with effective wetlands protection. It encourages commissions to ensure they receive the (free) mandated training. The effective date of the act should be one year out to give commissions time to comply.

SB 500 shifts the burden from the applicant to the commission or an opponent to show that an application for a dry hydrant will do no harm. We see no need for this legislation, and are concerned about the precedent it would set. It is in direct contravention to SB 569.

SB 569 is a critically important bill which addresses two shortcomings in Inland Wetlands and Watercourse Commission proceedings. It makes it clear that the applicant has the burden of showing no harm. The burden otherwise would fall completely on the commission, requiring potentially significant expenditure of public funds for staff and experts. It also requires the commission to consider all evidence before it, regardless of the source.

SB 747 harmonizes the requirements for DEP and DPH in considering cumulative effects of these sewage treatment plants in issuing permits. As these plants are significant potential sources of water pollution, Sierra considers this an important bill.

SB 5820 protects water quality by requiring consideration of the vegetation in a relatively small area (100') of river buffer. Riparian vegetation traps and stores contaminants migrating towards the river, provides valuable habitat, prevents erosion leading to stream sedimentation, and

absorbs nutrients which lead to eutrophication. It is highly appropriate that commissions take into account the effect of development on vegetation. The bill addresses important environmental concerns, is reasonable in its scope, and maintains the exemption for agriculture and forestry.

SB 5465 follows good science by limiting phosphorus which would be released to the environment. A major cause of eutrophication, this bill will help to protect the health of both waterways and Long Island Sound.

SB 5461 ensures that commissions consider all evidence in reaching a decision on an application. It is sound public policy to do so. The bill duplicates language found in SB 569.